

iSo THE PICTURE OF DORIAN
GRAY

there was in frankincense that made one
mystical, and in
ambergris that stirred one's passions, and in
violets that woke
the memory of dead romances, and in musk that
troubled the
brain, and in champak that stained the
imagination; and
seeking often to elaborate a real psychology of
perfumes, and
to estimate the several influences of sweet-smelling
roots, and
scented pollen-laden flowers, or aromatic balms,
and of dark
and fragrant woods, of spikenard that sickens, of
hovenia that
makes men mad, and of aloes that are said to be
able to expel
melancholy from the soul.

At another time he devoted himself entirely to
music, and in
a long latticed room, with a vermilion-and-gold
ceiling and
walls of olive-green lacquer, he used to give
curious concerts,
in which mad gypsies tore wild music from little
zithers, or
grave yellow-shawled Tunisians plucked at the
strained strings
of monstrous lutes, while grinning negroes beat
monotonously
upon copper drums, and, crouching upon scarlet
mats, slim
turbaned Indians blew through long pipes of reed
or brass, and
charmed, or feigned to charm, great hooded snakes
and horrible
horned adders. The harsh intervals and shrill
discords of
barbaric music stirred him at times when
Schubert's grace, and
Chopin's beautiful sorrows, and the mighty
harmonies of
Beethoven himself, fell unheeded on his ear. He
collected
together from all parts of the world the strangest
instruments
that could be found, either in the tombs of dead
nations or
among the few savage tribes that have survived
contact with
Western civilizations, and loved to touch and try
them. He
had the mysterious *juruparis* of the Rio Negro
Indians, that
women are not allowed to look at, and that even
youths may
not see till they have been subjected to fasting
and scourging,
and the earthen jars of the Peruvians that have
the shrill cries
of birds, and flutes of human bones such as Alfonso
de Ovalle
heard in Chili, and the sonorous green jaspers
that are found
near Cuzco and give forth a note of singular
sweetness. He
had painted gourds filled with pebbles that
rattled when they
were shaken; the long *clarin* of the Mexicans, into
which the
performer does not blow, but through which he
inhales the air;
the harsh *ture* of the Amazon tribes, that is
sounded by the
sentinels who sit all day long in high trees, and
can be heard,
it is said, at a distance of three leagues; the
teponaztli, that has
two vibrating tongues of wood, and is beaten with
sticks that
are smeared with an elastic gum obtained from
the milky juice
of plants; the *yoil-bells* of the Aztecs, that are

hung in clusters